The Imitation of Orchestral Effects and the Expressive Role of the Piano
in Richard Strauss’s Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 18:
A Performance Guide for Pianists

by

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ABSTRACT

The Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 18 (1888), was the last major work of chamber music by Richard Strauss (1864-1949). Although for only two instruments, the Sonata reflects Strauss’s growing interest in symphonic writing both in his tone poems and orchestral songs, anticipating his style of orchestration and his expressive use of tone colors. This study examines instances of orchestral writing in the piano and makes suggestions for their performance.

An overview of Strauss’s compositions, from his early chamber music to the ‘heroic’ symphonic works, places the Sonata in context. An analytical description of each of the Sonata’s three movements shows the structure and content of this large work and provides the framework for examination of the orchestral effects in the piano. Comparison of excerpts from the Sonata with passages from Strauss’s orchestral writing in Don Juan (1889), “Cäcilie,” “Morgen!,” and “Lied der Frauen” leads to suggestions for the collaborative pianist of ways to re-create the various orchestral effects.
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Ginger, for letting me pursue my dreams.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would to thank my entire committee for their patience and guidance over the years. You have all had a tremendous influence on my development as an artist. My education at Arizona State University would not have been the same without you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 SUMMARY OF STRAUSS’S WORKS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 EARLY WORKS AND THE INGENUITY OF THE SONATA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ANALYTIC DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Imitation of Orchestral Effects</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPRINT PERMISSION</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major: First Movement, mm. 1-3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 20-27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 39-54</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 55-63</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 150-166</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 200-204</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sonata: First Movement, mm. 302-311</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 1-16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 21-36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 41-54</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 72-82</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 89-92</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 131-136</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 1-9</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 10-17</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 49-65</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 83-88</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 102-109</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 211-224</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 239-255</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 338-349</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>“Cäcilie,” (orchestration) mm. 1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>“Cäcilie,” mm. 1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sonata: First Movement, mm. 1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><em>Don Juan</em>, mm. 458-475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sonata: First Movement, mm. 278-291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><em>Don Juan</em>, mm. 8-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 41-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>“Morgen!,” (orchestration), mm. 1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>“Morgen!,” (orchestration), mm. 25-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>“Morgen!,” mm. 1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>“Morgen!,” mm. 30-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Sonata: Second Movement, mm. 72-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td><em>Don Juan</em>, mm. 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Sonata: Third Movement, mm. 10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>“Lied der Frauen,” (orchestration) mm. 170-185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>“Lied der Frauen,” mm. 168-191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Sonata, Third Movement, mm. 83-95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The renowned German composer Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is an important figure in any collaborative pianist’s repertoire. He is one of the leading composers of art songs, operas, and symphonic works of the 19th and 20th centuries. Because his works remain extremely popular, collaborative pianists are likely familiar with a majority of his songs, operatic excerpts, and the horn and oboe concerti. While Strauss’s wide-ranging body of work began in the late-19th century and stretched well into the first half of the 20th century, he is most highly praised for his works written after 1887.

Don Juan, Op. 20, composed in 1888, was the first of many tone poems in which Strauss’s distinctive symphonic voice emerged. Departing from his earlier chamber-music writing, Strauss in these mature symphonic works displays fine-tuned orchestrations and a fusion of music genres. As the scholar Craig de Wilde points out, “Strauss’s biographers have written very little about the early works,” but it is here that “the greatest amount of development occurs in Strauss’s musical style.”1 Many of the early works are dismissed as juvenilia, but with them Strauss begins to define his own compositional voice. In contrast, the later works, on account of their programmatic elements or literary inspirations, have been exhaustedly studied by scholars regarding origin, style, interpretation, and form.

Under the influence of Hans von Bülow and the New German School of composition, the young Strauss in his early works began cultivating his own harmonic language, motivic development, and expressive tone colors. Mostly chamber music, these compositions show Strauss’s important development as a composer, as well as his

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gradual progression toward a more symphonic approach that culminates with the Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 18. The Sonata is a transitional work; upon its completion in 1888, Strauss departed from writing chamber music, instead focusing on tone poems, opera, and art songs. The work displays many characteristics of Strauss’s mature compositional style with a creative use of symphonic effects, a blending of musical genres, and an attention to tone color as a means of expression.

Close examination of Strauss’s development as a composer can help shed some light on the Sonata. Considering Strauss’s early influences and his later art songs, operas, and tone poems, it can be argued that the Sonata was born out of an orchestral conception. Through the analysis of the orchestral effects in the work, pianists will be inspired to re-create their own orchestral sonorities and expressive tone colors, resulting in a more meaningful performance of the Sonata.
CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY OF STRAUSS’S WORKS

Through the inspiration provided by a careful study of Berlioz’s orchestrations, Strauss composed orchestral songs and operas that captured the emotion of the text through rich tonal colors. From studying Berlioz’s works, Strauss recognized that instrumental color was the fundamental aspect of orchestration, and that orchestration was an inherent part of composition. Many of the orchestral songs Strauss wrote were conceived for his wife, Pauline, who, he said sang them “with unrivalled expression and poetic fervor.” Similar to his operas and tone poems, these songs include dramatic and lyrical vocal lines supported by imaginative orchestrations; the songs combine melodic and harmonic complexity with a powerful and descriptive use of instrumentation.

Although Strauss’s oeuvre includes over 200 songs written between 1870 and 1948, few of them have orchestral origins. Many of these songs were left un-orchestrated, and some originated as orchestral songs that were later transcribed for piano accompaniment. Strauss orchestrated twenty-seven songs, following their publications for voice and piano. The orchestrations expand the original piano accompaniments with fuller textures and a variety of creative and expressive instrumentations. These transcriptions reveal connections between Strauss’s piano and orchestral writing and thus are significant for the study of orchestral effects in the Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major.

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Considering the trends in music at the end of the 19th century with the works of Mahler and Wagner, it is clear that art song was evolving and adapting into a new symphonic environment. New types of concerts were emerging in Europe as the programs started to incorporate similar genres into one concert: Liederabend mit Orchester, Kammermusik und Liederabend, and Orchesterkonzert.\(^5\) As art song began to change, composers began to adapt by enriching the accompaniments either as imaginative orchestrations or as piano writing infused with distinctively orchestral effects.

Eventually, the “coloratura vocal style” in Strauss’s songs revealed “the influence of operatic writing,” while the accompaniments, which were “conceived for orchestra instead of piano,” became both “dramatic [and] expansive scene-like structures.”\(^6\) This free form of composition offered greater opportunities for emotional expression and much more diversity in the vocal style. In addition, Strauss’s orchestrated accompaniments opened the door for more textural variety and characterization of the songs’ emotions to enhance the expressiveness of the music.

Expanding his piano writing into orchestral accompaniments provided Strauss with conducting opportunities throughout Europe and the United States, and also provided more performance opportunities for his wife, Pauline. His growing success as a conductor and the increasing popularity of the Liederabend recitals made the orchestration of his songs inevitable. This process of orchestrating song accompaniments and thus blending musical genres also greatly influenced Strauss’s other symphonic compositions.

Although there are several early songs and lesser-known symphonic works, Strauss’s recognizable orchestral sound surfaced with the tone poem *Don Juan* in 1888. With this work, and the other tone poems that followed, Strauss brought to the symphonic genre startling innovations in orchestration and virtuosity, with a distinctive stylistic originality that “established [him] once and for all as the most important composer to have emerged in Germany since Wagner.”7 The tone poem genre allows for a free range of forms and emotional content. Strauss turned to a variety of sources for inspiration in these compositions: Shakespeare, German legends, poetry, philosophy, and even his own life while perfecting the use of orchestration to convey the musical narrative.8

In *Don Juan*, Strauss fuses passionate and energetic melodies with free motivic development, embedded in an expanded single-movement sonata form. *Don Juan* is considered Strauss’s ‘breakout’ work, and as music critic Alex Ross states, “the music expresses his outlaw spirit in bounding rhythms and abrupt transitions; simple tunes skate above strident dissonances.”9 Two other hero-inspired tone poems, *Don Quixote* (1897) and *Ein Heldenleben* (1898), are even more advanced in their expressiveness, and also use orchestration and enlarged formal structures to describe and fully realize the characters. *Don Quixote* is a string of variations depicting the knight’s adventures, while *Ein Heldenleben*, according to music critic Michael Kennedy, is an autobiographical work, in sonata-rondo form, in which Strauss identifies himself as hero:

Strauss’s adversaries are the music critics (characterized by petulant woodwinds) whom he defeats in a battle scene of

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astonishing power and virtuosity before retiring to the countryside to contemplate his “works of peace” (a string of musical self-quotations) with his wife.\(^\text{10}\)

The tone poems *Don Juan*, *Don Quixote*, and *Ein Heldenleben*, along with *Till Eulenspiegel* (1895), display Strauss’s ‘heroic’ style in his orchestral works, later incorporated into some of his operas. Alongside their epic literary origins, these works are inherently youthful and musically boisterous in nature.

Strauss’s ‘heroic’ style also adopts several elements from Beethoven’s ‘heroic period’ of composition.\(^\text{11}\) Like many 19\(^{\text{th}}\)-century composers, Strauss was drawn toward the breadth of ideas, expanded forms, and motivic development that Beethoven began cultivating in his ‘heroic’ period.\(^\text{12}\) Strauss’s sense of drama and his sophisticated attention to thematic development in his large-scale works are directly influenced by Beethoven’s work. Specifically, Strauss was also compelled by Beethoven’s dramatic use of the horn in the “Eroica” *Symphony*, Op. 55. In 1898, Strauss documented the influence of the “Eroica” on *Ein Heldenleben* stating that he was writing a tone poem, “admittedly without a funeral march, but yet in E-flat, with lots of horns, which are always a yardstick of heroism.”\(^\text{13}\)

The French horn was of great importance to Strauss throughout his life. He wrote two concertos for the instrument, the first for his father, Franz, in 1883 and the second in 1942. Although Strauss commonly used the French horn to signify heroic themes in his tone poems, he often highlighted the instrument in his operas and songs to beautifully


\(^{11}\) Beethoven’s middle period of composition, c. 1802-1812, is often referred to as his ‘heroic’ period.


\(^{13}\) del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, 164.
capture the feeling of personal retrospection, most notably in the *Tod und Verklärung* quotation heard in “Im Abendrot” from the *Vier letzte Lieder* (1948).\(^{14}\)

In the study at hand of orchestral effects in Strauss’s piano writing, the tone poems will be represented by musical examples drawn from *Don Juan*, Op. 20. Because this work was composed simultaneously with the Sonata for Violin and Piano, 1887-1889, many similarities can be drawn in terms of motivic development and the flamboyant use of orchestral effects and tone colors.

Like his tone poems, Strauss’s many operas display a rich variety of literary subject matter. They also display a wide-ranging harmonic palette and highly sophisticated motivic development that Strauss experimented with throughout his life. As in the orchestral works of his contemporary, Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), Strauss also explored the idea of obsession, notably in *Salome* (1905) and *Elektra* (1909).\(^{15}\)

These two intense stage works derive some of their power from their outstanding use of motivic development and their combination of Strauss’s lavish orchestration with touches of atonality that aid in the characterization of the leading female roles. According to the Strauss biographer, Alan Jefferson, the composer had “exhausted the tone-poem as a means of expressing his developing ideas,” and *Salome* and *Elektra* should be considered tone poems for the stage.\(^{16}\) Strauss’s combination of music genres extended the possibilities of creativity and musical expression.


In Der Rosenkavalier (1911), perhaps Strauss’s most popular stage work today, the music recalls eighteenth-century Vienna through charming, romantic characters and a series of antiquated, lyrical waltzes. Although Strauss had established himself as an avant-garde composer with the triumph of his previous stage works, he was a pragmatic businessman and created many lighthearted works with a perfect blend of late-19th-century German Romanticism and Neoclassicism. Another lighter opera, Ariadne auf Naxos (1912, rev. 1916), is a blend of commedia dell’arte and Strauss’s ‘heroic’ style.

Strauss with the success of many of his works achieved great popularity and fame as both composer and conductor. In addition, Strauss was also an accomplished pianist. Toward the beginning of his career in Meiningen, Strauss occasionally appeared as a soloist under the baton of conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow (1830-1894). In an effort to show his gratitude to his early mentor, Strauss composed the Burleske for piano and orchestra with the intention of having von Bülow at the piano for its premiere. However, von Bülow deemed the work ‘unplayable’, stating, “Every bar a different position of the hand; do you think I’m going to sit down for a month to study so refractory a piece?”

As Strauss recalls, von Bülow “indignantly criticized [Burleske] as not being pianistic, demanding an unnatural span (his hands were so small that he could only just reach an octave).” The title dedication was soon changed to Eugene d’Albert, who subsequently premiered the work. The Burleske is a striking and lively scherzo in an extended one-movement sonata form. The piece is “full of passages on an entirely new

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18Strauss, Recollection and Reflections, 134.
level of quick-witted fantasy and featherweight orchestration,” through which “the sharp, impish, satirical side of Strauss’s character is suddenly revealed.” The ‘impossible’ piano part is commonly recognized today as being “skillfully effective and grateful to play.” However, despite the work’s redeeming qualities and controversial origins, the Burleske never gained much popularity and is rarely performed even today. Similar to the Burleske, the Sonata contains many awkward passages in the piano writing that has prevented the work from being frequently performed.

It is also interesting to note that Strauss was rather critical of his own technical ability at the piano, stating, “My untrained fingers were, however, defeated by the difficulties of Chopin and Liszt.” Strauss also confessed to a lack of interest in practicing and showed a preference for sight-reading and playing orchestral reductions of Liszt and Wagner:

This is the reason why I never managed to become technically efficient (especially as far as my left hand is concerned)…On the other hand, I was a good accompanist of Lieder—in the free manner, never entirely faithful to the music.

Furthermore, his self-proclaimed ‘free manner’ of accompanying was also documented by a music historian and professor at the Universität für Musik Wien, Alfred Orel. He describes his experience turning pages for a concert with soprano Elisabeth Schumann and the composer at the piano:

When I opened the music at the first song, Strauss whispered to me, ‘you mustn’t follow the music, because I

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19 del Mar, Richard Strauss, 37.
20 Ibid., 39.
22 Strauss, Recollection and Reflections, 134.
play it quite differently.’ …The printed notes were often admittedly no more than aids to the composer’s memory…Without becoming expressly ‘orchestral’ he went far beyond the printed accompaniment and exploited all the possibilities at the piano…Countless times Strauss doubled the bass line and enriched the chords. Yet he could also, in “Morgen!” for instance, follow the written notes punctiliously. In “Cäcilie”…it was as though one was hearing the surge of a full orchestra.23

Orel also observed Strauss’s ability to weave songs together by “tracing the outlines of themes from his other works during the applause between songs.”24 From Orel’s accounts, it is clear that Strauss modified the accompaniments of his own compositions to mimic the tone colors and effects of an orchestra, and also possessed a knack for improvisation at the piano. Such support was needed in performance because these songs were conceived “generally for the operatic voice,” Alan Jefferson writes, and “though often with piano accompaniment, [Strauss’s songs] were invariably visualized and composed with an orchestral support for the voice.”25

Strauss’s devotion to art song, tone poems, and operas throughout his life led him to produce works that combine elements of all three musical genres. While this experimentation along with cultivation of unique musical forms had a direct influence on Strauss’s orchestral compositions, it also affected his writing for the piano in his solo works and chamber music. Generally, Strauss’s works reflect similar techniques of melodic and harmonic development and use of orchestral tone colors, all of which are directly anticipated in his 1888 Sonata. Furthermore, Strauss’s unique approach to the

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24Peterson, Ton und Wort, 156.
piano and his distinctive interpretation of his own music suggest that the collaborative pianist can enhance the performance of the Sonata by analyzing Strauss’s techniques of orchestral imitation.
CHAPTER 2

EARLY WORKS AND THE INGENUITY OF THE SONATA

The chamber music compositions of Richard Strauss went through a rapid development from his early years as a student until his mid-twenties. Textures were expanded and greater chromaticism introduced, and Strauss also began cultivating a complex use of rhythm and meter. These developments are most evident in his piano writing, both in solo works and in chamber music, between 1875 and 1888.

The Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major is the most significant composition from this time period and serves as a bridge between the early and mature works. Foreshadowing the characteristics of Strauss’s later works, the Sonata contains a rich harmonic language, complex rhythms, broad melodic contours, and motivic development that both expands and unifies the work. Although the early solo piano and chamber works are rarely performed, they collectively show a development towards a more symphonic writing style. The stylistic elements advanced even further after the completion of the Sonata in 1888, as Strauss departed from chamber music altogether and focused instead on tone poems, operas, and songs. Strauss had exhausted the sonata-form in a chamber-music setting and looked to larger forms that were better suited for his symphonic works.

Strauss began taking piano lessons at the early age of four and subsequently began playing the violin at the age of eight. Because his father, Franz Strauss, was an established musician in Munich, music was an essential part of the Strauss family. Herr Strauss, the biggest influence in Richard’s early years of musical study, ensured that his

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26 Franz Strauss was the principal horn player in the Munich Court Orchestra for almost forty years, from 1847-1889. In 1871, he was appointed professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München.
son was well versed in the compositions of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. His father had little interest in modern composers of the time, in particular Wagner. Furthermore, Franz’s rather conservative views of music are evident in Richard’s early attempts at composition, as these works reflect the composer’s profound understanding of the Classical style.\footnote{de Wilde, “The Compositions of Richard Strauss.”, 6.}

Strauss’s first few compositions demonstrate strong development in his technical skills as a composer while reflecting both his father’s influence and attention to the parameters of absolute music. The two piano trios of 1877 are conservative salon pieces, reminiscent of the early piano trios by Haydn and Beethoven. The piano part is of moderate difficulty, presenting the bulk of the thematic material while the violin often assists in doubling the right hand of the piano. The cello, on the other hand, only enhances the bass in the left hand, rarely deviating with its own melodic material. Harmonically, these two works are quite simple and include limited chromaticism. Slightly more progressive in its presentation and development of ideas, yet still reflecting the style of his early chamber works, the warm and melodic Cello Sonata, Op. 6 (1883), is the only duo sonata other than the Violin Sonata.

Unlike his previous compositions, the Piano Quartet, Op. 13 (1884), foreshadows Strauss’s mature compositional style. The Quartet demonstrates a strong influence of Brahms, and fewer traditional Classical elements that appeared in the earlier works. When discussing the quartet, Strauss biographer Ernst Krause suggests that “Strauss’s art grew in realistic power of expression [as] he used the instruments in an increasingly
individual manner.” The string writing in the Quartet is less accompanimental than in previous works, with increased polyphony and a technique of doubling that creates a dark, rich sound. The melodies include small motives that allow for more germinal development and transformation of the musical ideas. Such use of motives, similar to Wagner’s use of *leitmotifs*, is a hallmark of Strauss’s later works and is a unifying element in his tone poems and operas.

In the Quartet, the strings and piano are treated equally in the distribution of the thematic material. In turn, much of the string writing is more soloistic while the piano often offers a rich accompaniment. With the piano in a more virtuosic role than in the Trios and Cello Sonata, the writing incorporates numerous large sweeping arpeggios, octaves, and rapid passages for both hands that amplify the thick string texture. The Quartet also displays an extensive dynamic range and an imaginative array of expressive markings.

After writing the Quartet, Strauss began expanding his horizons by searching for new music outlets and teachers other than his father. Among Strauss’s earliest friends and supporters was Hans von Bülow (1830-1894), a conductor and pianist who became the biggest influence on his compositional development. Their relationship proved to be very fruitful as von Bülow championed Strauss’s compositions, premiered some of his works, and tutored the newcomer in conducting and orchestration. When von Bülow resigned from his position as conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra in 1886, he declared the 22-year-old Strauss as his official successor.29

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Von Bülow, who, unlike Strauss’s previous mentors, embraced the modern music of the time, demonstrated a deep understanding of the music of Brahms, and he introduced Strauss to the music of progressive modernists. Concerning von Bülow’s stance on modern compositions, Craig de Wilde writes:

It was unusual for a musical personality in the late 19th-century Germany to embrace the works of both Wagner and Brahms, since these composers were often considered to be the opposite ends of the spectrum. Either one accepted Wagner’s approach to the poetic idea acting as the structural element in his music, or they looked to Brahms in his use of traditional forms to create new explorations in the realm of absolute music.\(^{30}\)

Von Bülow communicated elements of these contrasting musical styles to the young composer, expanding his understanding of both styles, which therefore provided a variety of options in his own compositions. This development is most evident in Strauss’s Sonata as it combines traditional forms and free-flowing, poetic ideas.

Under von Bülow’s tutelage, Strauss also became familiar with the works of Hector Berlioz, a figurehead along with Franz Liszt of the New German School of composition. These composers’ ingenuity in new musical genres, coupled with their use of tone color as an expressive device, had a strong impact on Strauss’s own creativity.

Between 1885-1888, Strauss was “developing artistically with great rapidity, and confessed to feeling ‘trapped’ in a steadily escalating antithesis between poetic content and formal structure.”\(^{31}\) Because his orchestral compositions increased in both volume and size, Strauss incorporated further tonal variety and a richer harmonic language that

\(^{30}\)Ibid., 74.

supported the creation of more descriptive poetic ideas. Inevitably, the formal structures of his compositions became affected as Strauss blurred the lines of musical genres, creating hybrid forms that served as vehicles for his most dramatic and poetic musical ideas. According to Kenneth Birkin, “correspondence of expression and design [in Strauss’s compositions] seemed to propose the ultimate in terms of artistic unity.”

The Sonata is Strauss’s last major chamber work before he turned to symphonic writing in tone poems and opera. The piano part in the Sonata, which derives from Strauss’s interest in symphonic writing, stretches the limits of expressive qualities in traditional duo ensemble playing previously established by Beethoven and Brahms, as it enters a realm of symphonic effects and tone colors. Thus, the uniqueness of the piano writing establishes this work as a benchmark in the piano-violin duo repertoire. Furthermore, it expresses the fundamental elements of the New German School’s approach to large-scale compositions: thematic transformation, abrupt modulations, large development sections, and elements of cyclicism.

Nonetheless, the work is not performed as often as its contemporaries, the Brahms and Franck Sonatas. In the Strauss Sonata, both the violinist and the pianist must offer grand virtuosic solo playing, in addition to being intuitive and sensitive chamber musicians. The style of the piano writing is an unrestrained demonstration of pianistic textures that appear in many nineteenth-century piano concertos. Also, according to Norman del Mar, a conductor specializing in the music of Strauss, the violin writing

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“suggests a full body of strings or, at times, some other orchestral color of solo wind instruments.” In its relentless efforts to push the boundaries of Romantic expression and alter the notion of chamber music, the Sonata provides little respite for the instrumentalists, the pianist in particular.

In chamber music, it is ill-advised to leave out notes or simplify the piano writing for the purpose of alleviating particular technical demands. Yet, when the pianist is in the position of accompanying an instrumental concerto or operatic excerpt, the score is often densely transcribed (usually by someone other than the composer) often resulting in an unpianistic orchestral reduction. Many of these reductions require simplification in order to be effectively played at the piano. On the other hand, some of the accompaniments require an enlargement of the piano part, a common procedure for operatic coaches in playing a vocal score. As Gerald Moore states, “The accompanist, frail though he may be, becomes a substitute for a hundred men” and must produce a sound from the piano “approaching the support that [the soloist] gets from an orchestra.” Thus, in addition to defining the hierarchy of the musical lines, identifying the orchestral instruments represented in the piano score aids in highlighting the voice leading of thick textures while imitating the original instrumentation. However, the pianist may still be left with looming questions: What can I leave out? What do I include?

Many passages in the piano part of the Sonata are dense, resembling orchestral reductions; the piece walks a thin line between chamber music and what sounds like a symphonic transcription. Although playing all the notes is no small task, true artistry is

35 del Mar, Richard Strauss, 48.
needed to execute the underlying orchestral elements. With this in mind, the pianist in the Sonata can begin to reveal an orchestral conception that enhances the musical expression of the piece. Several examples from Strauss’s orchestral writing will be compared to the Sonata, providing further insight into the composer’s use of instrumentation and tone color while conveying specific emotions and musical imagery. In addition to enhancing the performance of the Sonata, the results of such study can apply to other works by Strauss, whether conceived with orchestral or piano accompaniments. All of the musical examples were written after 1888 and display both Strauss’s mature compositional style and his attitude toward orchestral tone colors as a means of conveying extra-musical ideas.
CHAPTER 3

ANALYTIC DESCRIPTION

Written when Strauss was 23 years old, the Sonata can be seen as a grandiose, ‘hyper-romantic’ example of chamber music in the late 19th century. It is an ambitious, large-scale work, a typical performance lasting about thirty minutes. The Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major is littered with numerous expressive markings and dramatic gestures that stretch the musical ideas to their limits and transcend the previous notions of ensemble playing. The work is dedicated to Strauss’s cousin Robert Pschorr, an organic chemist. However, at the same time of composition, 1887-1888, Strauss met the soprano Pauline de Ahna; perhaps the unhinged, lavish expression in the music is a direct result of the young man’s fervor for his soon-to-be wife.

Because the Sonata is a transitional work from his early chamber music writing to more mature symphonic compositions, it shares many characteristics with his ‘heroic’ symphonic writing, most commonly associated with his tone poems. Although there is no specified literary inspiration or heroic character disclosed, the Sonata does display a broad thematic layout, extended development sections, and a rich harmonic palette, all of which are propelled by an extroverted and compelling sense of heroism and symphonic grandeur.

It is interesting to note the key of the Sonata, perhaps another nod to Beethoven’s “Eroica”. However, due to the acoustic nature of the violin, E-flat Major limits the

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Kennedy, Richard Strauss, 51.
instrument’s capabilities of full resonance. Music written in sharp keys, rather than flat keys, allows for the violin to play on more open strings, which creates a brighter sound from the ringing overtones. A majority of the great violin concertos and duo sonatas are written in sharp keys, which highlight the instrument’s brilliant singing quality. Conceivably, Strauss chose E-flat Major for his Sonata to explore the darker timbral qualities of the violin.

Structurally, the piano greatly influences the layout of the work as a whole, introducing many of the themes and establishing the overall mood and character of the Sonata. This is not to say that the piano is separate or disconnected from the violin, nor is the violin subordinate to the piano. Due to the orchestral nature of the work, the instrumentalists must have a greater understanding of each other’s part, much like a conductor would have of a full score. Furthermore, the players’ end goal must be the same; their overall view of the work must coincide. In regards to playing violin-piano duos, Gerald Moore states:

One part weaves itself round the other in the most intimate interplay. …Equal weight is wanted from the two instruments, and if possible, the same quality of tone. …Above all, the players must each feel the same way over every note of it. Their views and intentions must be identical for each phrase and nuance.39

Such unity of parts is not unprecedented; in fact, it is an essential and fundamental part of chamber-music playing. Great chamber-music composers such as Beethoven and Brahms refined this type of unanimity in duo compositions, but the Strauss Sonata displays this characteristic to a much larger degree.

39Moore, The Unashamed Accompanist, 94.
The Sonata is considered the last of Strauss’s compositions to follow traditional Classical forms. Typical of a Classical sonata, the work has a traditional three-movement layout: sonata-allegro, slow ternary, and sonata-form finale. However, the thematic development in the sonata is anything but traditional. Strauss treats the musical ideas in a transformative and declamatory way that pushes the boundaries of duo sonata writing to such extremes that the work is more closely related to his programmatic symphonic music. Although many elements of the Classical sonata are preserved, the Sonata’s structure closely resembles Strauss’s tone poems; the work possesses the character of a through-composed sonata-fantasy hybrid, as the numerous themes are developed freely and rhapsodically.

Comparable to most of Strauss’s music composed after 1888, the Sonata makes use of germinal motivic development, a technique of Strauss’s mature compositional style that is important in his other large-scale works. Furthermore, Strauss greatly admired a development technique that he learned from studying Berlioz’s compositions, the réunion de deux thèmes. This particular technique features two individual themes, each heard separately at first and then later simultaneously. The réunion occurs numerous times in the Sonata, most often at the climaxes of individual sections or movements.

First Movement: Allegro ma non troppo

The piano opens with a declamatory fanfare evocative of a heroic horn call (Example 1, m. 1). This head motive consists of a jagged dotted rhythm and a sweeping

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triplet gesture. After the initial presentation in the piano, the violin reiterates 13 variations of this head motive until the climax of the phrase in m. 16. From here, there is a descent from the peak with a fast diminuendo and falling gesture, dissolving the first thematic idea, Theme 1a, at m. 20. The wide-ranging melodic contour in the violin gives the theme a soaring quality and also suggests the full-bodied sound of an entire string section.

![Example 1](image)

**EXAMPLE 1: First Movement, mm. 1-3**  
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Next, Strauss introduces Theme 1b, in m. 21 (Example 2). In stark contrast with the bombastic opening, Theme 1b is an expressive and flowing melody that suggests one of Strauss’s tone poems or art songs with its lyrical and expansive qualities. Strauss frequently equates the violin to the female voice in his orchestral works and features the instrument with concertmaster solos. Theme 1b should be played as if sung by the human voice to emphasize its inherent lyricism. The thematic material is, again, first presented by the piano before the violin takes over and develops it (Example 2, m. 25). The violin melody is interrupted in m. 30 by the head motive, *forte*, in the piano. As the

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41 Notable examples of Strauss’s use of concertmaster solos to represent the female voice include “Im Abendrot” from *Vier letzte Lieder* and Dulcinée’s solo in *Don Quixote*.  

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violin tapers off, the head motive grows and expands in a brief transition that ends in the relative key, C minor.

EXAMPLE 2: First Movement: mm. 20-27
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In this violent transition (mm. 30-39), Strauss hints at Berlioz’s *reunion de deux themes* by juxtaposing the brazenness of the head motive and the lyricism of the violin melody. Strauss pits the two instrumentalists against each other, but it is a far cry from dialogue between chamber musicians. The drama that Strauss creates in this transition resembles an interchange between different sections of the orchestra. Here, the piano surely sounds brassy and percussive, and the violin interjections resemble the more *legato* sound of the string section or woodwinds. The piano’s percussive cadential chords in m. 38 contrast with the violin’s brilliant, rapidly ascending scale that connects to the start of a new theme.
Theme 1c is introduced in m. 39, in the key of C minor (Example 3). Marked *appassionato*, the violin melody consists of a dramatic octave leap up to a dotted quarter note followed by a descending group of notes over a stormy accompaniment of sixteenth-note arpeggios. In m. 47, the piano, *forte*, changes to a wistful *pianissimo* and is suggestive of a different instrumentation with a more transparent sound. As the dominant key of B-flat Major begins to settle in m. 54, the piano calms down and slows from sixteenths to a gentle rocking triplet figure, marked *tranquillo*. This triplet figure becomes the basis for the new accompaniment in the presentation of the secondary theme.

**EXAMPLE 3: First Movement, mm. 39-54**
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Beginning in m. 59, Theme 2 is characterized by a sustained rising melody in the violin, coupled with a huge crescendo from both instruments that culminates in a triumphant climax (Example 4). Strauss differentiates Theme 2 from previous material with opposing melodic contours. Themes 1a, 1b, and 1c all start on a ‘G’ followed by descending motion (mm. 1, 21, 39) while Theme 2 is a powerful upward gesture. What is more, as the violin melody of the secondary theme ascends, the bass line of the piano descends by step, creating a wedge shape whose widest distance in m. 61 (Example 4) is quickly filled by the piano in an upward sweeping arpeggio. This wedge shape adds to the music a sense of brilliance and orchestral majesty.

EXAMPLE 4: First Movement, mm. 55-63
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What follows is another transitional passage, leading into an extended development section. In this transition (mm. 64-85), Strauss presents a variation of the head motive in a call-and-response effect between the two instruments with huge dynamic contrasts, from pianissimo to fortissimo, and then quietly recalls Theme 2 in hushed anticipation at m. 79. The head motive is heard repeatedly, now mysteriously and in the low register of the piano, resembling the low string section of an orchestra. The sound seems to almost fade away until another rapid scale, in m. 85, creates momentum into the development.

The highly chromatic and broad development is divided into three major sections: mm. 86-121, 122-163, and 164-200. In the first of these, Strauss strings together diminished and dominant-seventh harmonies. Here the music has a sense of stasis, as the harmonies remain unresolved. In this way Theme 1a is developed through several key areas.

In m. 122, there is a shift to A minor, which marks the start of the second section of the development. The material is derived from Theme 1c and unfolds in a chain of ascending minor thirds beginning in m. 133 (A minor, C minor, E-flat minor). Previously assigned to the violin, the appassionato Theme 1c is presented in the piano and combines the same stormy sixteenth-note accompaniment with imitative counterpoint in a predominantly soloistic passage. Once the key of G-flat Major is established in m. 146, the music calms down and almost stops again. Also, in this section Strauss prepares a false retransition by standing on the dominant of E-flat minor in mm. 154-159. With a prolonged pedal point on a B-flat, the music grinds to a halt before the piano reemerges with a passage of forte octaves reminiscent of a Liszt or Brahms concerto (Example 5).
The expected arrival of the recapitulation is derailed by another rapid ascending scale and quick modulation to F-sharp minor (Example 5, m. 163), which usher in the third section of the development.

**EXAMPLE 5: First Movement, mm. 150-166**
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In this final section, the violin and piano are pitted against each other, recalling the interplay of the first transitional passage in the exposition (m.30). The music is full of virtuosity and dialogue between the instruments as Themes 1a and 1b are developed with
canonic and imitative techniques. The piano part consists of large leaps and jagged octave passages that are difficult to maneuver. The development arrives at the real retransition in m. 183, yet Strauss still focuses on the ‘wrong key’ as the music centers on F-sharp rather than the dominant of E-flat Major. In m. 191, the tonicized F-sharp moves down a half-step to F, which allows Strauss to easily reach the dominant harmony of E-flat and set up the recapitulation.

![EXAMPLE 6: First Movement, mm. 200-204](image)

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The recapitulation, beginning in m. 200, is almost the same length as the exposition, but with slight modifications. The piano again opens with the head motive, yet the character is completely changed from that of the exposition (Example 6, above). This time the theme is played quietly and tenderly in the piano as the violin floats on a high B-flat. What is more, Strauss omits Theme 1b and goes straight into 1c at m. 221, in the parallel key, E-flat minor. As in the development section (m. 133), Theme 1c travels through another chain of ascending minor thirds (E-flat minor-F-sharp/G-flat-A) before the piano accompaniment settles down again from the sixteenth-note arpeggios to rocking triplets.
Theme 2 begins in m. 241, but in the distant key of A Major. The theme possesses the same wedge shape and brilliant climax as in the exposition followed by the same dynamic call-and-response of the head motive between instruments beginning in m. 249. This transitional section is then interrupted in m. 260 by a continuation of Theme 2, in E-flat Major. Here, Theme 2 is extended and developed along with Theme 1a and 1b. While the violin soars in the top register of the instrument, Strauss exploits the entire range of the piano and expands the writing with thick chords and deep bass octaves that culminate in a climax of operatic proportions on an ascending dominant seventh arpeggio in m. 287.

The resolution to the E-flat Major tonic, in m. 288, marks the beginning of the coda. The head motive is heard, **fortissimo**, followed by the previously omitted Theme 1b played by the violin. In m. 298, there is a brief moment of Theme 1c before it fades away. Similar to the transition in the exposition (m. 34), the movement comes to a close with an energetic and muscular gesture consisting of the head motive, played in unison by both instruments, followed by a rapid ascending scale and crashing chords (Example 7, mm. 302-311).
EXAMPLE 7: First Movement, mm. 302-311
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Second Movement: *Improvisation: Andante cantabile*

The second movement was published as a separate piece for violin and piano before being worked into the final version of the Sonata that same year. Strauss’s title, ‘Improvisation’, indicates a free and spontaneous feeling of dialogue between the instruments. The movement opens, in A-flat Major, with a charming violin melody supported by a gentle rocking accompaniment (Example 8). The simplicity of the opening resembles that of a Schubert art song; the violin represents the sweet timbre of the soprano voice as the piano provides a relaxed accompaniment. Again, Strauss’s treatment of the violin as a female voice further enhances the lyrical quality of the thematic material. At first, it sounds like the piano gets its turn with the theme in m. 11 (Example 8), but it abruptly stops, rounding out the first thematic idea, in m. 12.

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EXAMPLE 8: Second Movement, mm 1-16
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There is a fresh start at m. 13 (Example 8, above), with a new tempo, new key, and also a new theme, Theme 1b. The mood changes as the music becomes slight more animated. In this section, in E-flat Major, the piano writing is fuller, creating a sense of added motion with the arpeggiated left hand and syncopated right hand. The instruments take turns playing portions of Theme 1b, as it is tossed back and forth, and the setting becomes more impassioned. The violin closes out the theme in m. 25 (Example 9), and the piano echoes its last two beats, but with a different harmonization that connects Theme 1b to a return of the opening thematic material.

The return of Theme 1a, in m. 28, is a captivating variation of the opening thematic idea (Example 9). Strauss completely reharmonizes the theme, which provides the instrumentalists with an expressive change in tone colors. This effect also further adds to the improvisatory character of the movement. After a development patch, A-flat Major is restored in m. 38, as both instruments continue to play a variation of Theme 1a. At m. 41, the violin plays another variation of the opening theme. The piano’s harp-like accompaniment slowly ascends and fades away as the violin closes out the opening section in m. 45.
A transitional passage in mm. 45-48 leads into the contrasting *appassionato* middle section. The piano emerges from silence, in m. 44, with a repeated-octave triplet figure that gives the music a different effect. The new section begins in C-sharp minor at m. 49, with theagitated Theme 2a in the violin while the piano continues the stormy accompaniment (Example 10).
EXAMPLE 10: Second Movement: mm. 41-54

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In m. 59, the passage becomes increasingly agitated as Strauss adds a variation of the syncopated piano accompaniment from m. 13. After a huge crescendo and increase in tempo at m. 64, the music climaxes in F-sharp major and quickly disintegrates before leading into a brand new figure in m. 74.
In B Major, the effervescent arpeggios and rapid Chopinesque figures characterize the new *grazioso* idea. The piano takes the helm for Theme 2b (Example 11, m. 74) as the muted violin plays ascending arpeggios that gracefully dance around the piano’s melody.
EXAMPLE 11: Second Movement, mm. 72-82
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At m. 83, a new countermelody in the violin acts as a retransition to a return of the opening A-flat Major section. The violin’s countermelody anticipates this return by incorporating another variation of Theme 1a that leads into a sudden harmonic shift in mm. 90-91 (Example 12). As the violin sustains the ‘C’ over the barline, Strauss reharmonizes the ‘C’ in the piano with a ii9 chord, in A-flat Major, which continues directly into the return of Theme 1a. With this reharmonization, Strauss not only utilizes the shift in tone color as an expressive device, but he also makes a quick transition back to the opening section. This technique heightens the romanticized, improvisational nature of the movement.

EXAMPLE 12: Second Movement, mm. 89-92
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In another appearance of the réunion de deux thèmes technique, the modified A1 section, beginning at m. 91, combines the piano accompaniment previously used for Theme 2b with Theme 1a played by both instruments in a continuous exchange. What’s more, beginning in m. 101, melodic material from Theme 2a (piano) and Theme 1b (violin) are also incorporated, reuniting a majority of the thematic material previously heard in the movement and creating a sense of climax.

A brief coda, mm. 127-136, wraps up the movement with truncated phrases and a call-and-response between the instruments. The piano questions with an upward gesture that is answered with a chromatic dotted figure in the violin. Then (Example 13, mm. 131-136), the piano plays a quotation of the second movement of Beethoven’s Pathétique Sonata, Op. 13. It is unclear if this is an intentional quotation, perhaps another tip of the hat to ‘heroic’ inspiration, or if this is sheer coincidence. Finally, the movement comes to a close with three gentle harp-like figures in the piano that sparkle as they ascend to the top of the instrument.

EXAMPLE 13: Second Movement, mm. 131-136
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Throughout the second movement of the Sonata, Strauss uses a wide melodic contour in both instruments and a variety of expressive devices that reaffirm the “Improvisation” title. Although these large leaps in the violin (over a three-octave range) aid in the improvisatory feel, Strauss also achieves this feeling through surprising harmonic and textural changes and a free exchange of melodic material between the two instruments.

Third Movement: Finale: Andante—Allegro

The piano opens with a short, slow introduction (Example 14). In E-flat minor, this mysterious, Brahmsian section foreshadows the main thematic idea of the upcoming Allegro. Evoking the low strings of an orchestra, the introduction begins with somber, pianissimo chords. In m. 5, an anticipatory version of the main theme rises from the lowest register of the instrument. After a pianissimo close, the Allegro begins abruptly, in m. 10. This finale has elements of sonata form combined with free, fantasy-like development of the thematic material.
The *Allegro* erupts in an energetic, ascending gesture spanning over two-and-a-half octaves (Example 15). This opening has striking similarities to the head motive of the first movement (Example 1, above); both motives are heroic and declamatory in character, and they display the same dotted and triplet rhythms. The ascending Theme 1a is stated three times with variation in the piano (m. 10, 21, and 28), alternating with rising sixteenth-note responses in the violin supported by a percussive accompaniment of orchestral chords and arpeggios.
In m. 31, the piano for the first time takes over the sixteenth-note figure, which leads immediately into a transition. The violin’s soaring melody in this transition is derived from Theme 1c in the first movement of the Sonata (m. 39) consisting of the same octave leap up to a dotted quarter note followed by three descending eighth notes. This transition is interrupted, in m. 40, with the piano’s triumphant restatement of the opening, ascending theme, now briefly in C-flat Major. The virtuosic arpeggios also return and the violin continues with the transitional melody before leading into a new section.

Although the transition feinted at different keys, the broad lyrical Theme 1b introduced by the violin in m. 50 is still in the tonic key, E-flat Major (Example 16). As the melody progresses, the piano accompaniment in m. 59 transforms into a light,
scherzando figure. This ‘accompaniment’ is actually a very important figure that returns later in the movement and is used extensively in the development section (mm. 169-215) and coda (mm. 275-316). Once this new accompaniment figure is introduced in the piano, the passage quickly dovetails into an extended transition, mm. 58-82, as Theme 1b gradually dissipates. By mm. 77, the theme has been completely phased out and the scherzando figure tapers off, ending on the dominant seventh of C Major, the key of the next section.
EXAMPLE 16: Third Movement, mm. 49-65
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What follows is a grandiose and operatic Theme 2, spanning over two octaves (Example 17). The piano accompaniment is a wave of ascending arpeggios that give the violinist a blanket of sound to soar over. In m. 103 (Example 18), the piano gets its turn at playing the melody, while the violin plays a variation of the accompaniment. Void of any concern for traditional chamber-music playing, Strauss marks the violin accompaniment at *piano* while the melody is played *forte* in the piano. This kind of texture does not appear often in the chamber music literature, as it is inherently orchestral. The violin simply adds to the overall orchestral fullness that the thunderous piano part already provides (Example 18, mm. 103-109).

**EXAMPLE 17: Third Movement, mm. 83-88**  
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After the piano’s statement of Theme 2 (Example 18, above), there is a moment of dialogue between the instruments combining sixteenth-note arpeggios and slow-moving melody fragments that brings the C Major section to a close in m. 122. What follows is a transition in mm. 123-140 that returns to the character of the opening Allegro, combining restatements of Theme 1a with variations of the transitional melodic material from m. 31 and virtuosic arpeggios. This forceful recall of previous motives coalesces into a unison statement of the head motive, in m. 136, followed by a marcato,
rising chromatic line from D-sharp to A-flat which ushers in the central portion of the development section.

The development is the shortest section of the movement and Strauss neglects a good amount of the melodic material presented in the exposition. In mm. 141-169, Theme 1b is recalled and exchanged between the instruments, juxtaposed with a forceful outburst of Theme 1a in m. 145. Passing through A-flat Major, G minor, C minor, and D-flat Major, the melody phases out and the scherzando character returns. In mm. 169-215, Strauss focuses on the scherzando ‘accompaniment’ figure from mm. 59-82. The scherzando figure is played canonically between the instruments with an intricate and complex use of cross rhythms. Later, Strauss recalls Theme 1a (mm. 177, 183, 203, 207) and Theme 1b (mm. 169, 173, 195, 199) to simultaneously develop themes and motives, creating a very dense orchestral texture. True to the character of the scherzando figure, this portion of the development is marked pianissimo with only two brief forte outbursts in the piano (mm. 183,187); this respite provides much-needed contrast to the generally forceful nature of the movement.

Eventually, the scherzando figure becomes truncated and loses steam, and by m. 213 the figure is reduced to the three sixteenth notes, creating a sense of hesitancy (Example 19). After the key of F-sharp Major has been in place for some time (mm. 195-213), Strauss respells the piano’s G-sharp-A-sharp-F-sharp (m. 213) as A-flat-B-flat-G-flat (m. 214) before falling one more step to F, which is immediately harmonized with the dominant seventh of E-flat Major (Example 19, m. 215). This chord launches the piano’s brillante, cadenza-like flourish, spanning over five octaves, that propels the passage into the next section.
EXAMPLE 19: Third Movement, mm. 211-224
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The recapitulation is comprised of a modified, condensed version of the exposition followed by an enormous coda of almost 100 measures. After a restatement of Theme 1a in m. 221, Strauss completely omits the return of Theme 1b and skips right into Theme 2 (Example 20, m. 243). Here, Strauss uses the symphonic réunion de deux
thèmes technique and combines the recapitulation of Theme 2, in G minor, with the violin’s melody from the transition in m. 31, again evoking Strauss’s thick orchestrations.

EXAMPLE 20: Third Movement, mm. 239-255
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At m. 246 (Example 20, above), the instruments exchange material and the
réunion continues. The violin soars in its highest register as the piano continues to build
in density and intensity. Strauss follows the réunion with recalls of the transition,
resembling mm. 123-135, combining the head motive with the violin’s transition melody
and virtuosic arpeggios. This section culminates in a triple forte dynamic and a ritenuto,
in m. 273, giving a strong indication of the conclusion of the Sonata. However, Strauss
surprisingly ends the phrase with an abrupt modulation from E-flat to C-flat Major,
followed by a dramatic drop to pianissimo that launches the continuation of the
movement into the coda.

The extended coda, from mm. 275-373, perhaps the most virtuosic and
rhythmically complex moment of the entire Sonata, requires a very high level of technical
and musical skill to execute. Both instruments continuously pass the scherzando figure
back and forth in a section of intricate ensemble playing, with free chromatic
modulations. A developmental passage begins in m. 317, with a transformed version of
Theme 1a (in 6/8 meter as in the Andante introduction). The Neapolitan key,
(enharmonically spelled as E Major) arrives in m. 333. At m. 340 (Example 21), the
instruments play a virtuosic ascending arpeggio on a leading-tone seventh chord (in E-flat
Major) followed by a dramatic Grand Pause. In mm. 341-347 (Example 21), the violin
writing is strictly symphonic; the tremolo arpeggio is characteristic of orchestral string
textures and is rarely used in chamber music. What follows is a brief ‘codetta’ that
reaffirms the home key of E-flat Major with a return of the opening material. Theme 1a,
the transitional melody, and arpeggio figures all make their final appearances as the
Sonata comes to a close in a virtuosic and orchestral fury.
EXAMPLE 21: Third Movement, mm. 338-349
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CHAPTER 4
IMITATION OF ORCHESTRAL EFFECTS

According to Martin Katz, “Nothing can plunge a pianist into the world of colors faster than imitating an orchestra.” Examination of Strauss’s orchestrations in his symphonic works will allow the pianist to bring out certain important aspects of the Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major and will result in a deeper understanding of the composer’s work. This insight will give collaborative pianists the tools to spark their creativity in achieving similar tone colors. While there is a variety of techniques concerning the creation or emulation of these orchestral effects on the piano, the suggestions provided in this study for collaborative pianists may result in a richer, more meaningful, and convincing performance of the Sonata.

The beginning of the Sonata displays several similarities to Strauss’s orchestral works. Strauss often utilizes striking openings to grab the audience’s attention and also provide the basis for the entire motivic development in the work. For example, in the orchestrated song “Cäcilie,” Strauss advantageously uses the solo voice to develop the basic motivic idea of the song while the orchestra provides a lush accompaniment. Strauss composed “Cäcilie” the night before his wedding on September 9, 1894, and later orchestrated the song on September 20, 1897, lowering the key a half-step to E-flat Major. This change of tonality results in an easier key for the transposing instruments (particularly the brass) and gives the song a new, majestic quality, the same key as the Sonata.

44 Peterson, Ton und Wort, 108.
“Cäcilie” is in a dramatic vocal style with soaring phrases and text derived rhythmic motives. Following the opening head motive, Strauss thins out the orchestral texture and limits the writing predominantly to the strings while the solo vocal line develops the rising, rhythmic motive (Example 22, mm. 4-7). This motive, coupled with the text *wenn du es wüßtest* (if you only knew), appears seven times in the vocal line throughout the song in a somewhat obsessive way that reflects the infatuated text. The horns, harp, and woodwinds provide an added color from time to time by thickening the texture and adding to the already effusive accompaniment.
EXAMPLE 22: “Cäcilie,” mm. 1-7

The same treatment of orchestral effects should be applied to the piano version of “Cäcilie.” With Strauss’s orchestration in mind, the pianist should play the opening four-bar statement ambitiously and with bravura (Example 23, mm. 1-4). Then, to provide room for the vocalist to come to the foreground, the pianist should come down in dynamic and thin out the texture while maintaining the continuity of the ‘string’ sound, creating the overall orchestral effect that carries the music along for the singer.

EXAMPLE 23: “Cäcilie,” mm. 1-9

In the Sonata, similar to “Cäcilie,” Strauss develops the head motive of the first movement throughout, creating unity in this large-scale work. The piano’s opening gesture is a direct and grandiose statement advocating the full symphonic treatment (Example 24, mm. 1-3). Suggestive of a full brass section, this motive quickly subsides into a more legato chordal accompaniment as the violin begins to develop the head motive. When the violin takes over, the chordal piano accompaniment resembles a string section, while the solo violin, or vocalist, develops the rhythmic motive (Example 24, mm. 3-11).

EXAMPLE 24: First Movement, mm. 1-11
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According to Berlioz’s *Treatise on Instrumentation*,\(^{47}\) the French horn is “a noble and melancholy instrument” frequently used to portray “hunting fanfares.”\(^{48}\) The trombones “possess nobility [and] grandeur,” but is best suited when “played in harmony…with its other family members to display its true qualities.”\(^{49}\) To create the feeling of a full brass section in mm. 1-3 (Example 24, above), the pianist should play with a clear articulation and a focused attack. The use of flatter fingers and a deep warm tone for the opening of the Sonata will help create a more ‘brassy’ sound.

When the violin takes over the thematic material, it is important for the pianist to change tone colors in order to suggest a new, lighter instrumentation, allowing the violinist to be showcased. The richness of the bass and the thick chords in the piano in mm. 7-11 (Example 24, above) suggest the lush *legato* playing of strings. As “the true female voice of the orchestra,”\(^{50}\) the violin is featured in the passionate melody and treated soloistically as it develops the opening rhythmic motive.

According to Martin Katz, in order to achieve the richness of strings, the pianist must play with the “warmest, least percussive sound.”\(^{51}\) The keys should be struck with a slow key descent and long *legato* phrasing should be used. In mm. 3-11 (Example 24, above), the piano must match the violin’s sound; the tone must be drawn from the piano like the pull of a violin’s bow. Highlighting the deep bass notes and using the pedal abundantly may also add to the richness of sound.

\(^{47}\) Berlioz’s *Treatise on Instrumentation*, originally published in 1844, was later enlarged and revised by Strauss in 1904. The treatise serves as a reference to the characterization, expression, and color of orchestral instruments.

\(^{48}\) Berlioz, 259.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 302.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 55.

Comparable to the extravagant symphonic writing in “Cäcilie,” the tone poem *Don Juan*, Op. 20, also contains many orchestral flourishes that are a hallmark of Strauss’s mature symphonic style. In m. 460 (Example 25), there is a prolongation of the dominant for fourteen measures and a low ‘B’ pedal tone in the double basses. The violas begin playing a variation of the tone poem’s head motive, outlining the dominant harmony, before handing it off to the violins (Example 25, mm. 460-463). The head motive is given canonic treatment in the string section, mm. 464-469, before becoming truncated to just the ascending dominant arpeggio in m. 470. The ascending arpeggios in the strings, together with woodwind and brass fanfares, culminate in a huge flourish on a dominant seventh chord, ringing in the recapitulation of the work (Example 25, mm. 470-473).
EXAMPLE 25: Don Juan Op. 20, mm. 458-475
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The wide spatial distance in Strauss’s thick orchestration (Example 25, above) coupled with the massive and extended crescendo creates a scintillating effect. One cannot necessarily hear all of the notes in the ascending string arpeggios, yet there is clearly an expressive rush of sound in a flamboyant ascending gesture that emphasizes an important arrival point in the structure of the work.

Akin to *Don Juan*, an excellent example of Strauss’s orchestral flourishes appears in the climax of the first movement of the Sonata. In m. 278 (Example 26), the piano part becomes oversized and operatic while the violin soars high above on the E string. At the end of the recapitulation, there is a massive orchestral flourish in the piano (Example 26, m. 286) spanning over six octaves (almost the entire range of the keyboard) on a dominant-seventh chord before plunging back into the tonic in m. 288. The writing for the violin and piano here resembles Strauss’s thick orchestration and sweeping gestures exemplified in the passage from *Don Juan*. 
EXAMPLE 26: First Movement, mm. 278-291
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In the piano’s flourishing arpeggio in m. 286 (Example 26, above), the polyrhythm between the hands (three against four, five against six, six against seven) is not as difficult as it may appear upon first glance. The flourish is strictly accompanimental and lies underneath the melodic material in the violin. If the pianist follows Strauss’s pedal markings and triple forte dynamic, not all of the notes may be heard on the modern piano and the rhythmic interplay between the hands may be lost or blurred. The explosive orchestral gesture, characteristically Strauss, is much more important than the individual clarity of every note in the arpeggio, as was the case for the passage in Don Juan.

In the second movement of the Sonata, Strauss explores a more intimate mood, rather than the extroverted heroism of his tone poems. The entire piece displays exquisite lyricism, possibly conveying Strauss’s feelings for his fiancée and his growing interest in art song and opera. The violin opens with poetic, Schubertian simplicity (Example 27, mm. 1-4). It is important to note the cantabile marking in the score and Strauss’s treatment of the violin as a solo human voice, foreshadowing the composer’s penchant for concertmaster solos in his orchestral works. The violin plays an expressive, tender melody as the piano provides a simple accompaniment underneath (Example 27, mm. 1-12).
EXAMPLE 27: Second Movement, mm. 1-12
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Even though the piano is marked *pianissimo*, it is advised that the pianist enrich the bass notes in the left hand and play the right hand more lightly. In mm. 1-12 (Example 28, above), the pianist could imagine the low strings of the orchestral are represented in the left hand and the upper strings in the right. The middle register of the piano tends to be thick and overbearing at times. In order to convey the tranquility of

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sustained strings, the pianist is encouraged to play very smoothly, without any accents. As Martin Katz suggests, a passage such as this calls for the use of flat fingers with “minimum articulation,” as the “sound of hammers or keys would be foreign” to the desired orchestral tone color.\(^5\)

Strauss frequently uses the woodwinds in an accompanimental role in his orchestral works. For example, in Don Juan, Strauss contrasts the woodwinds’ pulsating accompaniment against a heroic melody in the violins. The violins play the restless melody, doubled in octaves, as it soars over the entire woodwind sections. With the help of the horns, Strauss creates a noisy, animated accompaniment that helps characterize the Don’s arrogant and heroic persona (Example 28, mm. 9-13).

\(^5\) Katz, 162.
EXAMPLE 28: *Don Juan*, mm. 8-13

Richard Strauss

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In the Sonata, Strauss uses a similar texture in the piano that suggests the orchestration of woodwinds. In stark contrast to the serene opening of the second movement, the stormy middle section consists of an agitato accompaniment in the piano that helps characterize the appassionato violin melody. After the violin closes out the return of the opening theme, the piano quietly emerges from the depths with a shift into A-flat minor (Example 29, m. 45) and a virtuosic octave display that leads into the new section in C-sharp minor. Here, the pianist could imagine a lighter articulation similar to woodwinds to achieve a more mysterious sound (Example 29, mm. 45-53).
Strauss attributes to the clarinet the ability to “execute accompaniment figures of a serious or humorous character”\textsuperscript{53} better than any other instrument and also to make “dreadful and haunting”\textsuperscript{54} sounds. Berlioz describes the oboe and bassoon with a tendency of becoming “grotesque”\textsuperscript{55} if played very strongly. In mm. 45-52 (Example 29, above), the pianist could imitate the clean attacks of the woodwinds and their ability to play crisp articulations at rapid tempos to get a “haunting” sound that will bring out the

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{53} Berlioz and Strauss, 221.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 210.
\textsuperscript{55} Berlioz, 164 and 190.
agitato character. The pianist should play with a more focused sound, with curved fingers, and a quick key depression rather than with the more casual approach to string imitation.

Throughout the Sonata, Strauss is very specific with his pedal markings, but they should be followed judiciously. It is interesting to note that there is no indication of pedal from mm. 45 until mm. 53 (Example 29, above), implying a variation of orchestration and tone color resembling the articulation of the woodwinds. As the music becomes more enraged, the gradual addition of the pedal can aid the pianist in getting more aggressive, ‘grotesque’ sounds out of the instrument so long as the clean articulation is preserved, suggesting the combination of woodwinds and strings.

Many passages in the second movement of the Sonata resemble Strauss’s more transparent, yet still expressive, orchestration in his song “Morgen!” Although the moods of the Sonata and “Morgen!” are completely different, the captivating lightness of Strauss’s orchestral writing in the song should be considered. The instrumentation in the orchestrated version is uniquely small and requires an ensemble of only muted strings, solo violin, harp, and three horns (Example 30).
EXAMPLE 30: “Morgen!,” mm. 1-20

“Morgen!” was composed on May 21, 1894, and later orchestrated by Strauss, with “Cäcilie,” on September 20, 1897 for his wife, Pauline.57 The work expresses the peaceful ecstasy of two lovers who greet the morning in an embrace. In Strauss’s brilliant orchestration, the lovers are depicted by the solo violin and solo voice, whose melodies become entwined upon the singer’s entrance in m 14 (Example 30, above). An extended introduction, featuring the solo violin, is the “centerpiece” of the song, while muted strings sustain the rich harmonies underneath gentle harp arpeggios.

In mm. 27-29, Strauss text paints the words langsam niedersteigen (descend slowly) with descending motion in the vocal line, which continues in the solo violin melody in m. 30, giving the music an intensified emotional quality (Example 31, mm. 27-30). When the horns finally enter, in m. 31, Strauss makes a change in texture to a chordal accompaniment, and the previous vocal line becomes more rhythmic and declamatory and recitative-like. Throughout the song, Strauss never lets the dynamic level rise above a piano, which helps to convey the tranquil, yet self-assured, affirmation of love.

57 Peterson, Ton und Wort, 108.
-ten, we-gen-blau-en, wer-den wir still und lang-sam nie-der-flie-gen,
Example 31: "Morgen!" mm. 25-43

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When performing “Morgen!” in its original version, for voice and piano, it is very beneficial for the pianist to keep Strauss’s expressive orchestration in mind. The same execution of the harp’s articulation (Example 31, above) should also be applied to achieve the sparkling and gentle transparency of the arpeggiated accompaniment while the most superb legatissimo piano technique is needed in playing the violin solo (Example 32, mm. 1-14). This captivating solo is essential in establishing the intimate atmosphere in the introduction that is maintained throughout the piece. A successful performance of this introduction will create a feeling of suspension in time. The pianist should emphasize the rich bass notes of the arpeggio, but with the use of una corda to help create the sound of the muted strings. This dampening will also allow the pianist to play the ‘violin solo’ in the right hand more prominently and with a different, warmer tone color (Example 32).
EXAMPLE 32: “Morgen!, mm. 1-20\textsuperscript{59}

At m. 31 (Example 33), it is also possible for the pianist to experiment with using the ‘brassy’ articulation (Example 25, above), to depict the entrance of the horns and to

\textsuperscript{59}Strauss, Richard Strauss Lieder Gesamtausgabe, vol. 1, 143.

78
produce a different tone color, accentuating the intense harmonies before returning back
to the more muted sounds in m. 39 (Example 33, mm. 31-38). In this case, a more
supported sound is necessary to highlight the change in texture and to combat the limited
sustaining capabilities of the piano, especially if playing a true pianissimo. In m. 31, the
pianist can try lifting the una corda until m. 39, and put it back down to play the piano
postlude (Example 33, mm. 31-43).

EXAMPLE 33: “Morgen!,” mm. 30-4360

60 Ibid., 144.
The articulation and tone color that Strauss captures in the orchestrated version of “Morgen!” are strikingly similar to passages in the second movement of the Sonata. After the middle *agitato* section with woodwind accompaniment, Strauss transforms the piano part into harp-like arpeggios that float around the double-dotted melody (Example 34, m. 74). For added effect, Strauss mutes the violin to “give the instrument a…mysterious and soft expression.”61 This variation in accompaniment and dynamics reflects a change in orchestration for a gentler, more transparent texture, suggestive of the harp and muted strings.

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61 Ibid., 32.
EXAMPLE 34: Second Movement, mm. 72-77
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Berlioz describes the harp as having “veiled, mysterious” qualities in the lower register, while “strings of the highest octave have a lovely crystalline tone.”\textsuperscript{62} When it comes to orchestral imitation on the piano, the harp is the most closely related of all instruments. To imitate the harp’s articulation and tone color in mm. 72-77 (Example 34, above), the pianist can try “playing Scarlatti on the keyboard and Debussy with his right foot.”\textsuperscript{63} Strauss’s specific pedal markings in the score immediately bring the unique “\textit{laissez vibrer} aspect”\textsuperscript{64} of the harp to life. As Strauss suggests, the pianist should allow the veiled harmonies to ring in order to achieve this fully realized harp effect.

The third movement of the Sonata directly anticipates the dramatic opening of \textit{Don Juan}, which contains Strauss’s characteristic use of rhythms and an orchestral rising gesture (Example 35, mm. 1-3). In the Sonata, the pianist should play the opening theme of the third movement with the rich sound of Strauss’s large orchestration, and with clean rhythmic precision. This startling entrance of the theme after the somber introduction will create a wonderful, almost disorienting, effect resembling the virtuosic power of Strauss’s opening statement at the beginning of \textit{Don Juan}.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{62} Berlioz, 141.
\item\textsuperscript{63} Katz, 178.
\item\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
EXAMPLE 35: Don Juan, Op. 20, mm. 1-3
Richard Strauss
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After the slow introduction, the energetic head motive of the third movement epitomizes Strauss’s orchestral characteristics (Example 36). The melodic contour and rhythm closely resemble those of the explosive opening of Don Juan. Strauss’s use of complex rhythms and meter is the fundamental element of the Sonata. The rhythms and shapes in this head motive will serve as the basic motivic cells that are developed throughout the work.

EXAMPLE 36: Third Movement, mm. 10-13
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In the piano’s statement of the theme (Example 36, above) Strauss’s unique combination of dotted rhythms and triplet figures recalls the head motive of the first movement (Example 1, above). It is essential to any pianist’s interpretation that a clear distinction be made between the duple and triplet rhythms in order to convey the rhythmic intricacy of the themes. What is more, Strauss consistently writes an accent above each sixteenth-note, in both movements, when it is a part of the dotted eighth-
sixteenth rhythm. This is a clear indication by the composer that the sixteenth note should not become a triplet.

Representative of Strauss’s orchestral writing for the piano, the third movement of the Sonata directly relates to another one of Strauss’s orchestrated songs, “Lied der Frauen.” Composed on May 4, 1918, and later orchestrated on September 22, 1933, “Lied der Frauen” is the longest and most dramatic of the Op. 68 cycle, displaying operatic influence on Strauss’s orchestrated art songs. The song depicts several women troubled with concern for their loved ones (a sailor, shepherd, miner, and soldier) during a raging thunderstorm. When finally the storm breaks, the women sing to God for their comfort as the music gradually calms down and dissipates. “Lied der Frauen” is representative of Strauss’s poetic imagination and his ability to characterize emotions and actions through orchestration. The breaking of the waves is depicted in the undulating strings and the women’s anxiety in the string tremolos. What is more, there is a dramatic and effective use of timpani. Berlioz endows the timpani with the capability of making “darkly, menacing sounds.” Strauss effectively employs the timpani in “Lied der Frauen” to depict the thunder and lightning. All these orchestral effects work together to enhance the emotional qualities of the song.

In the last four stanzas of poetry, Strauss thins out the orchestra’s texture to convey the calming of the storm as the soloist sings a heroic and majestic melody thanking God for this relief. Here Strauss combines the second violins, violas, and cellos with two harps in the accompaniment. The arpeggios imitate the calming of the seas as the storm passes and the waves start to subside, while a mode shift from C minor to C

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66 Berlioz and Strauss, 380.
Major brings a sense of hope and optimism. The mostly diatonic harmonies are tinged with occasional dissonances, recalling the tumultuous waves and anxiety-filled women depicted in the former key, C minor. At m. 170 (Example 37), the tempo actually doubles, yet the change of orchestration, the tone color, and the expansive vocal phrases create a sense of spaciousness implying a more relaxed tempo. The first violins play a countermelody that weaves in and out of the majestic vocal line, until the melodies in m. 179 (Example 37) combine for a long descending phrase in unison.
EXAMPLE 37: “Lied der Frauen,” mm. 170-185\(^6\)

When performing the original version of “Lied der Frauen” for voice and piano, the pianist should try to mimic Strauss’s descriptive orchestration to support the distressed vocal line. The buoyant arpeggios with the grandiose vocal line can create a sense of majesty and hope. The countermelody of the right hand should also assert itself with the voice’s melody, but never overpower the singer. The pianist must be careful in m. 170 (Example 38), and later when the melody is doubled (Example 38, m. 179), not to let the textures get so thick or muddy that they cover up the vocal part.
EXAMPLE 38: “Lied der Frauen,” mm. 168-191

Instances of this same tone color and articulation appear also in the third movement of the Sonata. At m. 83 (Example 39), the violin plays a long, heroic melody in C Major while the piano accompanies with rich, diatonic arpeggios. The piano quietly doubles the violin’s melody with the quarter-note chords placed intermittently in the accompaniment. The continuity of the melodic line and broad range of the violin imply an operatic setting, and the thick nature of the piano accompaniment reflects a full body of strings (Example 39, mm. 83-95).
EXAMPLE 39: Third Movement, mm. 83-95
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The accompaniment in m. 83 (Example 39, above) is best played with clear articulation, while maintaining the fluidity of the ascending gesture. The pianist could imagine the sparkling, clear tones of the harp combined with the even, uninterrupted sounds of the low strings. The digital energy in the fingers combined with clean pedal changes coinciding with the harmonic changes (almost every bar) will help create a smooth, yet layered, blanket of sound for the violin melody to soar over. Strauss states, “the pianissimo of a large orchestra is incomparable.”69 His goal was not to achieve a larger sound with his enormous instrumentation, but rather to increase the orchestra’s tonal palette. In m. 83 (Example 39, above), the pianist could imagine the reserved power of the full orchestra to create a unique tone color.

69 Berlioz and Strauss, Treatise on Instrumentation, 409.
CONCLUSION

In establishing his own unique compositional voice, Richard Strauss sought to develop an imaginative and expressive use of orchestration and to combine qualities of a variety of genres. Consequently, Strauss’s last major work of chamber music, the Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 18, is an original work that expands the conventional sonata and is full of symphonic influences that are beyond the scope of traditional chamber music playing. The Sonata, as the final product from Strauss’s early years, marks the end of his chamber music period and the beginning of his lifelong devotion to art songs, tone poems, and operas. Therefore, the Sonata should be approached as a transitional work that foreshadows Strauss’s mature compositional style as exemplified in his orchestral works.

The Sonata is idiomatically pianistic, yet intrinsically orchestral in its design. The inherent grandeur the work possesses, as well as the virtuosity it requires, allows the pianist many opportunities to think orchestrally in this inflated example of ‘chamber music’. For any pianist interested in performing the Sonata, or any Strauss work for that matter, a study of Strauss’s orchestration is necessary in order to inform the imitation of instrumental colors at the piano. Strauss states, “the art of instrumentation can be taught as little as the art of inventing beautiful melodies, beautiful chord successions, and powerful rhythmical forms.” However, through immersion into Strauss’s orchestral works, the pianist should be inspired to develop a wider variety of tone colors at the piano and create a richer, more meaningful interpretation of Strauss’s Sonata. Lastly, as Martin Katz states, “an active and fertile imagination is the collaborative pianist’s best

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70 Berlioz and Strauss, 2.
friend.” With a tonal memory of Strauss’s orchestrations, the pianists will be able to recall timbral characteristics of the instrumentation and re-create the effects at the piano.

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APPENDIX

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